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RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 2693
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 8744
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 4663
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RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 000382

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SUBJECT: STAFFDEL BLAZEY MEETS WITH PAKISTAN'S 11TH CORPS
AND FRONTIER CORPS

Classified By: DCM Peter Bodde, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (SBU) SUMMARY. StaffDel Blazezy traveled to Peshawar January 18-19 to meet with the leadership of Pakistan's 11th Corps and the Deputy Director General (DDG) of the Frontier Corps. Discussions centered on efforts to combat the growing insurgency in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). The 11th Corps Commander ascribed the growing militant threat to external support and the fertile recruiting ground created by FATA's lack of employment and educational opportunities. He noted the Army is currently needed not only to fight the militants, but also to restore and maintain order, as the situation is currently beyond the capability of the civil armed forces. The Frontier Corps DDG echoed 11th Corps' call for improved economic development plans, but claimed Pakistan's forces had the militants "on the run." END SUMMARY.

11th CORPS COMMANDER CALLS FOR "NATIONAL SOLUTION" TO
INSURGENCY

12. (C) In a January 18 meeting in Peshawar, Pakistan's 11th Corps Commander Lieutenant General Masood Aslam briefed StaffDel Blazezy on the security challenges the 11th Corps faces in the FATA, especially in combating the growing insurgency. LTG Masood noted that it was difficult for the local Pashtun communities to accept the Army moving into the area, but it was unavoidable as the civil armed forces (Frontier Corps, Frontier Constabulary, local police, etc) lacked the capacity, organization and training to effectively address the current security problems. Mr. Blazezy asked how Masood thought the Frontier Corps (FC) would fare following the current initiative to train and equip the FC. Masood responded that he was confident the Frontier Corps could handle a "subdued" insurgency, indicating that the Army would first need to bring the insurgency down to a manageable level.

13. (C) Masood stressed that the insurgency was a national problem, requiring a national solution, and the people of Pakistan needed to accept the Army's role in that solution. Unfortunately, he observed, that was not a popular view, saying, "We must work on this collectively; (engaging) the intelligentsia, the media and government officials." Masood also emphasized the importance of the Army's "law and order" role in the FATA where there is a problem with law enforcement capacity. He observed there is a need for people in these areas to feel confident that their rights will be

protected by local authorities - otherwise, they revert to tribal justice.

¶4. (C) Describing the insurgency, LTG Masood said the jihad against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan had created a large, trained militant base among the Pashtun that continued to receive "outside" help. "This reservoir" he added, "never dries up." Additionally, the FATA was a fertile ground for recruitment as the average male is 15-30 years old with few prospects for a better life given the dearth of educational and employment opportunities in the region. Masood stressed the need to convince the people of the FATA that militancy is not the way to achieve political change.

NEED FOR NEAR-TERM IMPROVEMENTS IN LIVING CONDITIONS

¶5. (C) Acknowledging militant groups could not be eradicated completely, Masood asserted that economic development was essential in rendering local communities less vulnerable to militants' propaganda. Introducing more educational and employment opportunities was key, as was improved governance in these areas, but such development is a slow process, observed Masood, and people become frustrated. He said the average person needed to see improvement in the short term, but problems could not be solved by the traditional method of political agents "handing out cash." Masood welcomed the U.S. plan to devote 750 million USD on FATA assistance programs over the next five years and wondered if some aid could initially be focused in one or two "at-risk" areas - perhaps Kurram and/or Khyber agencies.

¶6. (C) In response to a question from StaffDel Blazey regarding resources, Masood noted that his equipment needs are well known to his U.S. interlocutors and he felt his

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troop strength currently sufficient, despite high operations tempo. However, if the situation grew more volatile, he would need more troops. He added that there was a distinct need for more Frontier Corps troops, as it was preferable, whenever possible, to use Frontier Corps forces in FATA rather than Army.

¶7. (C) Commenting on cooperation with RC-East on border issues, he said it was good, but complained about a lack of actionable intelligence. He said much of what he received through intel-sharing was information rather than intelligence.

MASOOD: U.S. STATEMENTS OF MISTRUST UNDERMINE ARMY'S MORALE

¶8. (C) In his final remarks, Masood stated that public remarks by U.S. journalists and government officials expressing a lack of confidence in Pakistan - questioning its commitment to the war on terror or its ability to secure its nuclear arsenal - seriously undermined morale in the Pakistan Army. There was no problem, he said, among his senior officers, but the junior ranks and enlisted men were less educated, and more easily "stung" by these comments. Such statements of mistrust, as well as imposing conditionality on assistance, only increased perceptions that the Pakistan Army is merely doing the bidding of the U.S.

FRONTIER CORPS

¶9. (C) StaffDel Blazey also met with Frontier Corps Brigadier General Tila, Deputy Inspector General, North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). Tila acknowledged FATA presented a significant security challenge, and that the region was difficult to control; however, he maintained that Pakistan forces had militants "on the run" and the recent spate of suicide bombings were an indication of the enemy's frustration at its lack of success. Echoing Masood's remarks, Tila said a three-pronged approach was necessary to combat the insurgency - security action, economic development programs and governance reform.

110. (U) StaffDel Blazey Participants

John Blazey (HAC-D)
Sarah Young (HAC-D)
Kris Mallard (HAC-D)
Tom McLemore (HAC-D)
The StaffDel was accompanied by Escort Officers CDR Jeff
Fatora and Lt. Col. Mark Ross.

StaffDel Blazey did not have the opportunity to clear this
cable before departing.

PATTERSON